



***STATEMENT OF
ALBERT W. LABELLE, JR.
LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR
OF THE
DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS
DEPARTMENT OF WISCONSIN
ON BEHALF OF SENATE BILL 357
BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
AND VETERANS
AND MILITARY AFFAIRS
WISCONSIN STATE SENATE
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Good morning, Chairman Leibham, Ranking Member Lassa and distinguished members of the Committee.

On behalf of the Disabled American Veterans, Department of Wisconsin, I am honored as Legislative Director to present testimony to the Committee on Senate Bill 357.

One of DAV's legislative priorities is to eliminate employment barriers that impede the transfer of military job skills to the civilian labor market. With a current unemployment rate for Iraq and Afghanistan veterans at 13.1% and even more disturbing with unemployment for veterans age 18-24 at 33.2% and women veterans at 16.8%, the need for SB 357 is paramount.

Many economists state one of the reasons for these high unemployment numbers is the simple fact that military experience does not translate into the private sector. SB 357 helps to alleviate this.

DAV supports SB 357. We do note and caution that SB 357 does allow a degree of latitude to the Department of Safety and Professional Services and the examining and credentialing boards in determining military experience equivalency. The possibility exists that the practical application of SB 357 may not meet its intent. SB 357 may need a future review to ensure that its intent is properly implemented.

Recently, H.R. 364 or the VOW to Hire Heroes Act of 2011 passed Congress unanimously and was signed into Public Law by the President. This law, Public Law 112-56, contains a provision requiring the Department of Labor to evaluate what military skills and training should be equivalent in the civilian labor market and what will work to make it easier for veterans to obtain licenses and certifications for those jobs.

The State of Wisconsin deserves to do no less. Perhaps in the future, the Department of Labor's findings, when promulgated, may prove beneficial to the proposed state statute in smoothly transitioning military skills and training into the civilian labor market.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, this concludes my testimony and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

